

Peter Baillio House
(owner Daigre)
near Alexandria, La.
Rapides Parish

HABS No. LA-2-1

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of North Louisiana

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
CENTRAL UNIT—ST. LOUIS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Clarence W. King, District Officer
1029 Dalzell St., Shreveport, La.

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An original copy of a request for a grant of land by Pierre Baillio is dated February 9, 1795. A copy of this grant and a translation are on pages 41 and 42. It is difficult to determine just where this land is located, except for its description as being on the left bank of Bayou Rapides, going up. Three such tracts appear on the early maps of the area.

Sometime around 1794 or 1795, Pierre Baillio II built a home on Section 35, T4N, R1W, covered by grant #B1098. A verification of the section on which the home is located is in the patent signed by John Tyler, President, bearing the date March 1, 1845, the date on which this land was legally recognized by the United States as the property of Pierre Baillio. (This record is now in the possession of Miss Ethel Hynson, whose parents at one time in recent years owned the land). The land is located about two miles northwest of the original site of the present city of Alexandria--a part of it is now within the city limits. It is known to the present generation as Kent Plantation, the name having been given it by the Hynson family who obtained it from the heirs of Pierre Baillio II after the death of that gentleman. The old residence, with a few acres of land, is now owned by the Alexandria American Legion Post. There is no record of the exact date on which Pierre Baillio II began construction of this home. Tradition says that he put the slaves to making and laying bricks and embarked on a riverboat for a trip down the Red and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. Being delayed in his return, he found the negroes had made and laid bricks until his return, thus causing the house to be unusually high above the ground.

A description of the house, which is now known as Kent Plantation, appeared the Alexandria Town Talk of January 19, 1949:

"Plantations dotted Central Louisiana when the plantation house was built, but most of the land still was unclaimed forest. There was a small settlement along Red River, but only five years had elapsed since Alexander Fulton had established his store on the riverfront, at 'Rapido' on Red River. The dedication of Alexandria as a town was still years in the future, and the population of the entire parish had been listed three years before as 920 whites and 250 free persons of color.

"Brick kilns were put up on the edge of the bayou, and lumber from the land was cut on the place to build Kent House. Probably some of the supplies were brought up the bayou on small boats that travelled out from the river trading post, but most of the material that went into Kent Plantation House was from the land itself.

"Slaves worked at the laborious tasks of molding the soft clay into the rose-colored brick, of handhewing the huge cypress trunks that would make the floors, the pillars, the beams, and the exquisite paneling of the old house.

"The first story was built entirely of brick, with small deep windows from which the family could fight off the

* Possibly 1803.

45-16XV

Indians who still regarded Central Louisiana streams and forests as their own. On the second floor were the cypress floors, the massive beams and the delicate panels that give the house so much of its distinction.

"The adobe walls of the Kent plantation house are made of deer hair and mud--from deer that had no doubt once roamed the woods along the bayou, mud that was dug, mixed, and carried by long lines of slaves, most of them strange, foreign creatures who could only speak in the brief gutturals of their native Africa."

"One of the more romantic stories of the old Kent house is connected with the white iris that bloom in profusion there each spring. The tradition is that they were brought by the first bride to the plantation, and they grew and multiplied until they almost covered parts of the gardens."

"Out in the back of the house the slave quarters were once located, and the old kitchen was out in the yard, too. Way back, there is brick about two feet under the ground, laid as if it might have been a floor, in the herringbone pattern similar to that used for the floor of the original house. Just what that brick was used for--whether it was a floor, or whether it was laid there for some other purpose they never knew."

The exact location of this house, in its present setting within the limits of Alexandria, is on Rapides Avenue between Texas Avenue and Land Avenue.

The plantation is believed to have passed out of the hands of the family about 1842, when the Hynson family bought it from the Baillio estate. When he died in 1875, he left the house to his youngest son, Sally Hynson, who later married James A. Ringgold of St. Louis. After Mr. Ringgold's death, his wife continued to live there for many years, finally selling the property about 1905 to The "Kent Company". This was later sold to Mrs. Alice Daigre, whose husband was descended from Pierre Baillio, brother of Pierre Baillio II. In 1949, the Albert M. Post of the American Legion acquired the property, which is still in their hands as of this date (1960).

It was in this home that Pierre Baillio II lived for more than half of a century, and there he died on January 8, 1824. He devoted his life while living on Bayou Rapides to planting.

In the Louisiana Herald of March 24, 1824 appeared the following statement:

"Persons having claims against the estate of Pierre Baillio, deceased, present them to J. B. Heno.

/s/ Jon Compton
Sosthene A. Baillio
Executors"



HOME OF PIERRE BAILLIO II AND MAGDELAINE EMELIE LACOUR
(Now known as Kent Plantation)